

I<sub>7</sub>4      *On the Aversion of Men of  
Taste*

that, on the same principle, the accustomed diction of evangelical religion also must be pronounced barbarous. For I suppose it will be instantly allowed, that the mode of expression of the greater number of evangelical divines,\* and of those taught by them, is widely different from the standard of general language, not only by the necessary adoption of some peculiar terms, but by a continued and systematic cast of phraseology; insomuch that in ^ reading or hearing five or six sentences of an evangelical discourse, you ascertain the school by the mere turn of expression, independently of any attention to the quality of the ideas. If, in order to try what those ideas would appear in an altered form of words, you attempted to reduce a paragraph to the language employed by intellectual men in speaking or writing well on general subjects, you would find it must be absolutely a version. You know how easily a vast mass of exemplification might be quoted; and the specimens would give the idea of an attempt to create, out of the general mass of the language, a dialect which should be intrinsically spiritual; and so exclusively appropriated to Christian doctrine as to be totally unserviceable for any other subject, and to become ludicrous when applied to it.<sup>f</sup> And this being extracted,

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\* When I say *evangelical divines*, I concur with the opinion of those, who deem a considerable, and, in an intellectual and literary view, a highly respectable class of the writers who have professedly taught Christianity, to be *not* strictly evangelical. They might rather be denominated moral and philosophical divines, illustrating and enforcing very ably the general principles of religion, and the Christian morals, but not placing the economy of redemption exactly in that light in which the New Testament appears to place it. Some of these have avoided the kind of dialect on which I am animadverting, not only by means of a diction more classical and dignified in the general principles of its structure, but also by avoiding the *ideas* with which the phrases of this dialect are commonly associated. I may however here observe, that it is by no means altogether confined to the specifically evangelical department of writing and discourse, though it there prevails the most, and with the greatest number of phrases. It extends, in some degree, into the majority of writing on religion in general, and may therefore be called the theological, almost as properly as the evangelical, dialect.

<sup>f</sup> This is so true, that it is no uncommon expedient with the would-be wits, to introduce some of the spiritual phrases, in speaking of anything which they wish to render ludicrous; and they are generally so far successful as to be rewarded by the laugh or the smile of the circle, who probably may never have had the good fortune of hearing wit, and have not the sense or conscience to care about religion.